



**MDAS**

MALLEE DISTRICT ABORIGINAL SERVICES

# **Baby-led yarning from the womb to the wonder years:**

**Encouraging curiosity and reflective conversation  
in Community to support Infant and Family**





# Building Reflective, Safe Relational Space in non-clinical, community practice and delivery

WHO: The Early Years Service at Mallee District Aboriginal Service which is guided by attachment-oriented, trauma-informed practice.

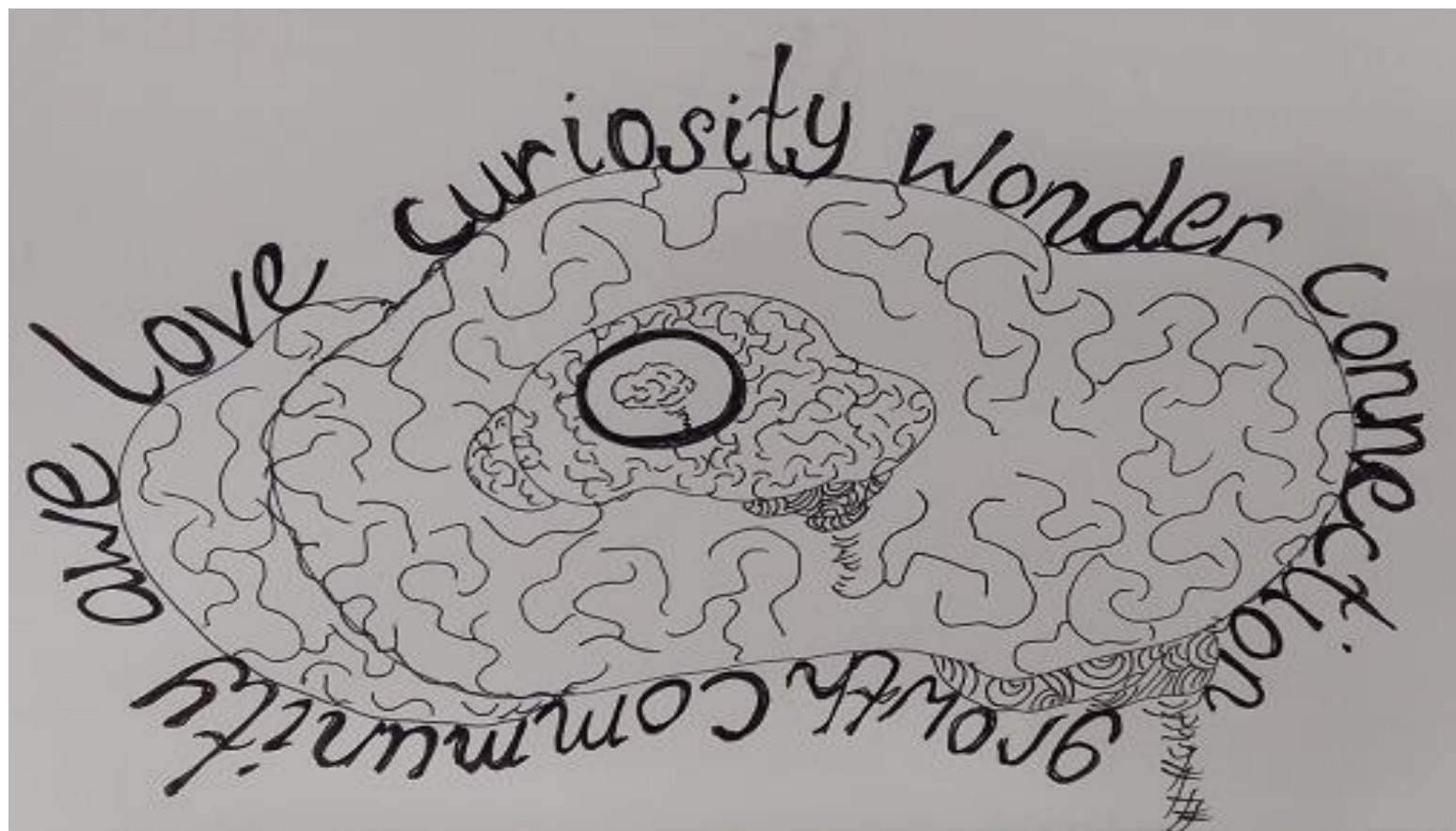
WHAT: To provide a service that is a holistic, baby-led, relationally safe base for our families, making sure we consider how theories guiding good infant mental health are integrated with cultural wisdom in daily service delivery.

HOW: A journey of curiosity, sharing wisdom and yarning which builds resources from various perspectives into a culturally adapted whole of family approach to promote mentalizing, beginning with a novel mental space in pregnancy and extending into clinically rich, baby-responsive conversations from birth.



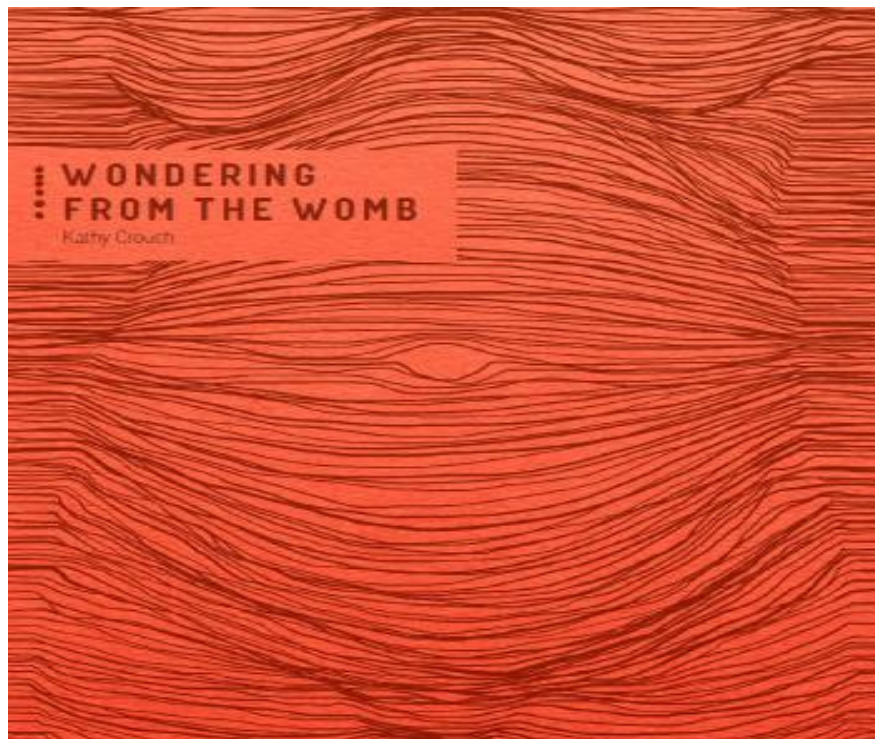


# Building Reflective, Safe Relational Space in non-clinical, community practice





# ‘Wondering From The Womb’



Originated in the mind of the author at NBO training –it has come full circle



# Embedding the Resources and Supports in Service Practice

Developing the 'holding space' through curiosity, wonder, conversation, sharing wisdom ideas

Inviting connection through reflection and body-rich awareness

From the Womb, Baby continues their sharing of wisdom...

Held in mind by parents and staff and community.

Leaders hold the frontline staff

... who hold the parents ...

... who hold the baby...

... who holds their own wisdom and uniqueness







# Embedding the Resources and Supports in Service Practice

Non clinical staff need the supports and learning and skills development to ensure this wrap around community of 'being held' is maintained for babies and families as they grow.

How can we give staff learning, practice skills and experience in these domains?

POST NATALLY the elements of curiosity, wonder and sharing personal narratives are being incorporated in how Newborn Behavioural Observations (NBO) are being integrated.

MDAS is currently working on enriching the NBO or **'Baby's First Yarn'**

Again, non clinical settings, rich with story-telling and space for connection are emphasized. Non clinical safe adults are being supported to keep the curiosity going.



As baby and family grow and learn together, the wonder and curiosity moves towards group of individual options for circle of security as well as ongoing case support that



*"Generations of vibrant, healthy and strong Aboriginal communities."*



# Embedding the Resources and Supports in Service Practice

Adapting clinical gold to suit cultural safety

WHY the NBO?

WHAT is the NBO anyway?

WHAT is the current learning system work at MDAS in exploring and enriching the NBO?

WHO is involved?

WHO might benefit?

WHAT are we measuring to assess the value and success of the learning system work?





# Embedding the Resources and Supports in Service Practice

Mum reflects on how her son has changed since the last session







# Embedding the Resources and Supports in Service Practice

Joseph responds to a rattle





# Embedding the Resources and Supports in Service Practice

Noticing parent emotions and acknowledging strengths





# Embedding the Resources and Supports in Service Practice and Delivery

The process of integrating learning: Getting frontline staff to increase confidence, curiosity and communication in the relational space...

Training via the usual approach often used with clinical professional staff was not really as effective:

At the start of this process some frontline workers were trained in the NBO and some were not. There was not a great update of practice change, comfort with NBO provision or even the conversations occurring in parenting relationships... we needed a systems learning strategy:

The first staff focus group was held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

At this point:

- 50% of frontline staff had formal NBO training
- Only 15% of frontline staff had used this training or parts of this training in there day to day practice. **WHY???**





# Focus Group Findings

- Went to training and then expected to complete NBO's
- 1 day training with a doll is not enough
- How do we explain to parents what the NBO's are?
- Time between NBO's, knowledge forgotten

Staff suggestions to improve NBO participation of NBO's with staff and clients

- Change language
- Parent sessions to explain NBO's
- Something to give back to the parents Eg. Photo, change summary form for parents

## NEXT....

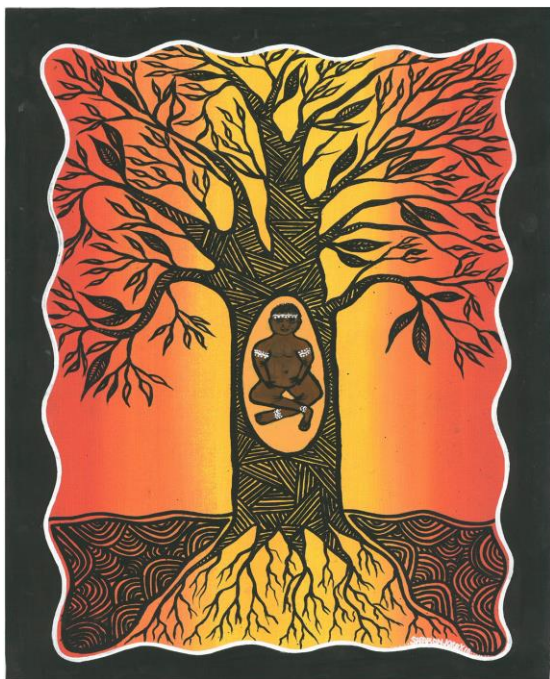
- Gathered ideas for summary form from staff:
  - Renamed Newborn Observation to Baby's First Yarn
  - Change Summary form to be culturally sensitive
  - Commissioned local artist to create a painting from staff ideas to use as Baby's First Yarn summary sheet



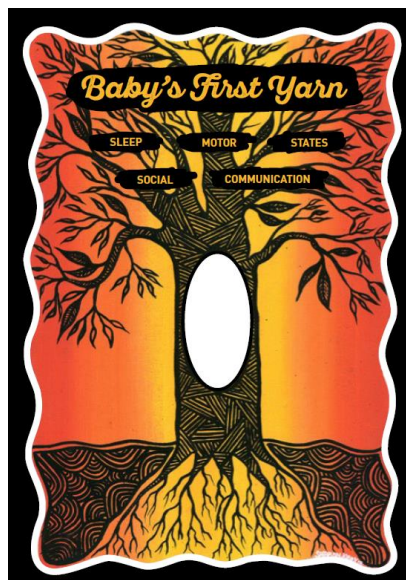


# Designs

Artist Image



Designer Options





# Where we are NOW!

## Staff focus group #2 feedback

- “I have been using the language and the wonder what baby is thinking etc while having visits with the families.”
- “I have felt privileged that the family felt comfortable enough to allow me to do an NBO.”
- “from training have more awareness, having great conversation with mum.”
- Change design to a card form with picture, baby photo and Baby’s First Yarn on front and wording inside
- Change wording from:
  - States = Today I was.....
  - Motor = Look how I can move...../Watch me move.....
  - Communication = I can tell you things about me by.....
  - Sleep = When I sleep I.....
  - Social Behaviour = I show you I am interested in you by.....

We are still learning from each other!!!!





